

The Philosophy of Anarchism: A Critical /Appraisal of Contemporary Statism

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Abstract: Contrary to the promotion of statism as a social nirvana is the view and position of anarchism which limits the authority of society over individual. Anarchists believe in the individual autonomy and attribute him to both the alpha and omega of their social theory. As against the theories of democracy, communism, socialism, liberalism, etc. that hold that it is in the state that life, liberty and property are properly guaranteed and that the rights of the individuals are subsumed under the state, the anarchist are of the view that the state is not necessary. That individuals' rights must be paramount within any political enclave. Anarchism sees the state and its agents as something to do with evil. Against statism, it advocates for voluntary cooperation between individuals and groups which is not only a fairer and more moral way of organizing society, but is also more effective and orderly. Anarchists do not conceive of a society without order, but order they visualize arises out of voluntary association preferably through self-governing groups. As an essential ingredient of anarchism is the superiority of man to any form of government. The portrayal of the goodness of anarchism notwithstanding, theorists of statism appear critical by their defence of the practical existence of the state.

Key words: *Social nirvana · Statism · Anarchism and communism*

INTRODUCTION

Over years, the problems of individual freedom, the authority of the state and the obligation of citizen to the state have attracted attentions. Many philosophers have proffered certain political theories and believed if followed to their logical ideals will apparently lead to social nirvana. And it is the view of many philosophers that individuals will attain the highest element or personality of their potentials under the state and its government. Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, etc have propounded theories entrenching the supremacy of state's function to the individuals' realization of their potentials. Aristotle says "the state is an association with a view to some good". And he holds that the individual when isolated from the state is not self-sufficient and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole.

But contrary to this view and in answer to the traditional problem of liberal political theory-the limits to the authority of society (state) over individual, the anarchist answers "society has no authority over me" The anarchists believe in the individual autonomy and attribute him to be both the alpha and omega of their social theory. It is in this respect that Robert Paul Wolff

writes "I am unable to find any valid and persuasive argument justifying the authority claimed for the state" (348). This indicates that the individual's freedom and development are better guaranteed without government.

As against this view, many political thinkers believe that it is in the state that life, liberty and property are properly guaranteed and secured. Political theories such as democracy, monarchism, socialism etc support the indispensability of the state. All these have the state as a means to some ends and that the rights of the individuals are subsumed under the state.

On the other hand, some political philosophers-anarchists are of the view that the state is not necessary. That individuals' right must be paramount within any political enclave. This view sees the state and its agents as something to do with evil. This is the idea of political philosophy called *ANARCHISM*.

This writing critically looks into what is meant by ANARCHISM. In exposition of the concept anarchism, we will see the anarchist's attack on the state's authority, law and property. This work will also show the prescriptive relevance of anarchism with a view to draw out the hamstrings inherent in its tenets.

What Is Anarchism?: Anarchism, as a political philosophy has been given various definitions by different people of different epochs in history, but the remarkable and unifying essence is that all the definitions given boil down to the abolition of the state and its paraphernalia. Anarchist temperament involves a criticism of society as it is, a vision of a desirable alternative society and a plan for proceeding from one to the other. In *Macmillan Encyclopedia*, Anarchism is seen as “a political theory advocating abolition of state and all governmental authority” (47). Also *Encyclopedia Americana* defines Anarchism as “a theory of social organization that represents the extreme of individualism.” (Adamic,777). While Terry M. Perlin in his *Recurrence of Defiance*, says “Anarchism is anti-politics, anti- authoritarianism, a mood of perpetual rebellion” (3).

Etymologically, anarchism a double Greek root - i.e the word ‘archon’ meaning a ruler and the prefix ‘an’, indicating without; hence ‘anarchy’ means the state of being without a ruler. By derivation, ‘anarchism’ is the doctrine which contends that government is the source of most of our social troubles and that there are viable alternative forms of voluntary organization. [1]. And by further definition the ‘anarchist’ is the man who sets out to create a society without government.

Dilating on these definitions, anarchism looks upon all laws and governments as invasive, the twin sources of nearly all social evils. It therefore advocates the abolition of all governments as the term is understood today, except that of originating co-operation. In sympathy with this, Herbert Reed writes

I am not attempting by casuistry to defend an attitude of complacency or compromise. The existing social order is outrageously unjust and if we do not revolt against it we are either morally insensitive and criminally selfish. But if all that our revolt secures is merely a reconstruction of the societal crystal along another axis, our action has been in vain (16)

Instead of state and law, most anarchists believe that ‘voluntary co-operation’ between individuals and groups is not only a fairer and more moral way of organizing society but are also more effective and orderly. This is why Proudhon says “the highest perfection of society is the union of order and anarchy” (294). This invariably means that anarchism should not be confused with confusion and lawless state of affairs. Anarchists do not

conceive of a society without order, but order they visualize arises out of voluntary association preferably through self-governing groups.

One other essential ingredient of anarchism is the superiority of man to any form of government. According to Proudhon “man, as anarchist sees him, is good. He can be trusted without government, or at least, he will do less evil without government than with it” (860). In the same vein, Robert Paul Wolff in his “In Defence of Anarchism” supports this view of anarchism. Faced with the traditional problem of political theory, he confesses that he is unable to find any valid and persuasive argument justifying the authority claimed for the state, “the individual is left as both the alpha and omega of social theory. The old anarchy is the kingdom of the unrestrained individual, free of social contracts binding him to a particular form of government” (348) lending more light to the individual autonomy, Henry David Thoreau in his essay “Resistance to Civil Government” writes:

There will never be really free and enlightened state until the state comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power from which all its own power and authority are derived (402)

Anarchism has been an old political theory but the modern anarchism started with Pierre Joseph Proudhon’s essay “ is Property?” Other anarchists are William Godwin, Mikhail Bakunin, Max Stirner, Peter Kropotkin, Benjamin Tucker, etc. There are many types of anarchism but it is not the concern of this essay to look deep into them. Some of them are individual and communal, pacifist and revolutionary anarchism, etc. Proudhon advocates for anarchism of peaceful change while Bakunin believes in a violent means as necessary. Although Bakunin’s anarchism is revolutionary, the association of anarchism with violence however is an incorrect characterization of a philosophical tradition which has been largely non-violent.

Exposition of Anarchist Political Philosophy: As it has developed over the centuries, Anarchism has come to represent an extreme view of individual freedom and the possibility of social organization without hierarchy or authority. In fact, the word “anarchism” means having no government.

With regard to the first premise of anarchism-the only authority that has moral and legitimate force is the authority each individual gives to himself. Nobody can be constrained to perform any act unless the act is derived

from his or her own independent will. Here a question is posed: does the state has the authority to command obedience from the citizens, their own moral views notwithstanding? To answer this question, Wolff reflects on what it means to be a moral agent. According to him:

Moral agent, must be autonomous, thinking and judging for himself and accepting responsibility for his actions...A citizen, therefore has no duty to obey laws, even through the may decide to obey them for. self-interested or prudential reason. [2]

Following Rousseau's concept of popular sovereignty, anarchists in twentieth century have argued that the individual's right to legislate for himself is inalienable, it cannot be delegated. According to Rodee and others "the administration of law may be delegated, but not the making of law. Legislation and policy making are the exclusive right of each individual as he or she reflects on his or her own interests and needs. Each citizen as his own legislator would be an apt characterization of the anarchist position". (79)

As mentioned earlier, anarchism literally is a society without an 'Arkhos', that is, to say, without a ruler. It does not mean a society without law (order) and therefore it does not mean a society without order. The anarchist accepts the social contract, but he interprets that a contract in a particular way which he believes to be the way mostly justified by reason. The social contract as expounded by Rousseau implies that each individual in the society surrenders his independence for the common good, with the assumption that only in this way can the liberty of individual be guaranteed. Liberty is guaranteed by law and law, to use Rousseau's phrase is the expression of the general will. According to Reed:

Where the anarchist diverges from Rousseau and from that aspect of the democratic tradition which expression in parliamentary socialism, is in his interpretation of the manner in which the general will should be formulated and enforced. The anarchist believes that individual must retain his liberty in any social formation and that upon the individual enjoyment of liberty depended all progress and civilization. (132)

To understand anarchist position to the phenomena "State" and "property" it will be expedient to treat them into subsections. Thus, the explanation goes.

Anarchist's Attack on the State: The concept of society without government is essential for the understanding of the anarchist attitude. In rejecting government, the true anarchist does not reject the ideal fact of society. According to the anarchists, the difference between a governmental society and anarchist society is the difference between a structure and organism. Metaphorically, state (or governmental society) is built while anarchist society grows according to natural laws. For the anarchist, the state is held together by an equilibrium of stresses that is equilibrium between destruction and construction which dominates state's tactics. While that of society without government is the equilibrium between liberty and order which dominates the anarchist's view of ideal society. But order for the anarchist is not something imposed from above. It is a natural order and is given expression by self-discipline and voluntary co-operation. [1]

Having drawn this demarcation, it is the anarchist's view that the state (government) is a usurper of right over individual liberty. It is not natural and tends to diminish the value of man in the society. It is against this background that Proudhon declares:

To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated over, regulated, docketed, indoctrinated, preached a controlled, assessed, weighed, censored, ordered about, by men who have neither right nor knowledge nor virtue. That is government, that is its justices, that is its morality. [1]

For the anarchist the autonomy and freedom of individual cannot be compromised for the imposition of the state. For the anarchist, freedom is not something to be decreed and protected by laws and states. It is something you shape for yourself and share with your fellow men. States and laws are its enemies and from every corner of the varied spectrum of anarchist beliefs opinion on this point is quite unanimous.

The state is evil and brings no order but conflict. Authority thwarts the natural impulses and makes man strangers to each other. To show the loathsomeness of the state to the anarchists, William Godwin puts his attack clear (quoting Woodcock as he quotes Godwin):

Government lays its hands upon the string that is in society and puts a stop to its motion. It gives substance and permanence to our errors. It reverses the genuine propensities of mind and instead of

suffering us to look forward, teaches us to look backward for protection. It prompts us to seek the public welfare, not innovation and improvement, but in a timid reverence for the decisions of our ancestor, as if it were the nature of mind always to degenerate and never to advance. [1]

In terms of any fixed organization with formalistic authority, the anarchist is diametrically opposed to it. Anarchism has never been represented by a political party, because its followers have wished to retain their freedom to react spontaneously to concrete situations and have regarded political parties as sharing the same faults as governments.

Organization that depends on coercion for its existence is a perversion of natural order and far from producing peace. For anarchist, it ends always in strife and violence. However, the objection which anarchists have always sustained to fixed and authoritarian forms of organization does not mean that they deny organization as such. The anarchist is not an individualist in extreme sense of the word He believes passionately in individual freedom, but he also recognizes that such freedom can only be safeguarded by willingness to co-operate, by the reality of community.

As for constitutions, the anarchists have continued to regard them as fixed and guaranteed political systems which rigidity the state institutionalizes in the exercise of power; neither of these effects is acceptable to libertarians (anarchists) who believe that the organization of community life on a political level should be replaced by its social and economic organization on the basis of free contractual agreement between individuals.

The anarchists regard the freedom and autonomy of individual in every society as supreme and cannot be compromised to the dictate of the state. For the anarchists, politics should be the science of liberty and not that of government of man. Politics should be geared to the lives according to the dictates of our reason. It should enlighten our right to maintain our freedom and show the duty to respect the right (or freedom) of others. As against government by man, the anarchists see government as oppression which finds its highest perfection in the degradation and dehumanization of man in the society. It is this that prompted Winstanley to declare: "Everyone that gets an authority into his hands tyrannizes over the others.

With regard to the question of conflicts between the individual and state, the anarchist is of the view that the abolition of the state and its agents is necessary because

they assume that if every citizen would be up to appreciate the beauty and harmony of laws inherent in nature, he would be as an enduring one. The society in which he lived would automatically be a natural society, a society of free consent in which law and liberty are but two aspects of the same reality.

To the anarchist, democracy has the form of anarchism, that is, going by its ideal nature whereby every citizen is autonomous and is party to every legislation. But with regard to the modern democracy, the right or liberty of individual living in democracy, where individuals have delegated authority, you no longer have a democracy. This is contained in the view of Reed "to them democracy has to do with individual autonomous liberty. Under a state the individual's liberty is determined by the state" (131)

The anarchists are of the view that the supremacy of the state over the individual liberty is as a result of misconception and misapprehension of man's position in nature. Anarchist noted that the mistakes of every political thinker from Aristotle to Rousseau have been due to their use of the abstract conception 'man'. Their systems, assume the substantial uniformity of this creature of their imagination and hence propose various forms of authority to enforce uniformity on man.

But against these theorists, the anarchists recognize the uniqueness of the person and only allows for organization to the extent that the person seeks sympathy and mutual aid among his fellows. In this regard, Reed will say:

"In reality, therefore the anarchist replaces the social contract by functional contract and the authority of the contract only extends to the fulfilling of specific function".(133)

Anarchist's Attack on Property and Law: Anarchism frowns at property and its attack on property is a corollary of the glaring gigantism and the impersonality of the modern state. The state (and its agents) are seen as inhumanity of man against man and as a means to achieve supremacy over others in the bid to exploit and protect the position of a class against others. The attack of the anarchists on property is evidently pronounced in Proudhon's book - What is Property? Proudhon's answer to the question he poses is "property is theft" and this phrase which identified capitalism with government as the two main enemies of freedom. This became one of the key slogans of his time. Continuing, Proudhon says property (being safeguarded by law), by its disposition and encroachments is oppressive and anti-social.

Laws of state cannot be left out, in anarchist's attack on property. For the anarchist laws are inimical to the liberty of the citizens. In his "Conspiracy of Law" [3] shows that the so-called "rule of law" and the systems of legislation, enforcement and required obedience to law have a single, concentrated foundation - to maintain inequality and perpetuate social injustice. (274-275)

In Kropotkin's "The Uselessness of Laws", he is of the view that laws are to the protection of property and government. For the anarchists, laws on property are not made to guarantee either the individual or society to the enjoyment of the produce of their labour. On the contrary, they are made to rob the producer of a part of what he has created and to secure to certain other people that portion of the produce which they have stolen either from the producer or from society as a whole" (111)

In view of this, it is their belief that the law is unjustly appropriating to those who claim the authority of the state a certain portion of the produce of labour of mankind in general. And it is precisely so because this appropriation and all other forms of property bearing the same character are a crying of injustice, that a whole arsenal of laws and a whole army of soldiers, policemen and judges are needed to maintain it against the good sense and just feeling inherent in humanity. [4]

For the anarchist, law (the civil code in each country) serves no other purpose than to maintain this appropriation, this monopoly for the benefit of certain individuals against the whole of mankind. In anarchists' condemnation of law, it is their position that a great many of our criminal laws have the same object in view, their end being to keep the workman in a subordinate position towards his employer and this affording security for exploitation. In view of this end-(i.e. to protect the unjust appropriation of human labour by certain monopolists), the anarchist says that there is no reason for their existence and they call for a social revolution to put an end to them.

In his attack on the state and its position on wealth, Franz Oppenheimer points out two mutually exclusive ways of acquiring wealth. One is through the production and exchange which he calls the "economic mean". The other way does not require productivity, it is a way of seizure of another's good or service by the use of force and violence. This is the method of one-sided confiscation of theft of the property of others. This is the method which Oppenheimer termed "political means" to wealth. For him economic means is natural path for man, the means for his survival and prosperity on this earth.

Oppenheimer noted that political means uses coercive, exploitative means contrary to natural law, it is parasitic. According to him:

For instead of adding to production, it subtracts from it. The "political means" siphons production off to a parasitic and destructive individual or group and this siphoning not only subtracts from the number producing, it also lowers the producer's incentive to produce beyond his own subsistence. In the long run, the robber destroys his own subsistence by dwindling or eliminating the source of his own supply (25-26)

From the above, it will be seen that the political means is the means used by the state to protect property. On the question: what is the state? In answer to this, Oppenheimer says the state is the organization of "political means", it is the systematization of the predatory process over a given territory.

In support of this view, [5] writes:

The state is that organization in society which attempts to maintain a monopoly of the use of force and violence in a given territory, in particular, it is the only organization in society that obtains its revenue not by voluntary contribution but by coercion. (128)

Given this picture, anarchists are of the view that with the use of force and violence to obtain its revenue, the state generally goes on to regulate and dictate the other actions of its individual subjects. In this vein, the state provides a logical, orderly, systematic channel for the predation of private property; it renders certain, secure and relatively "peaceful" life (one of the parasitic caste in the society). In the light of this anarchist's picture of the state and property, [5] concludes "The state has never been created by a "social contract", it has always been born in conquest and exploitation" (129). In line with this view, Albert Jay Nock writes:

*"The state claims and exercises the monopoly of crime
It forbids private murder, but itself organizes murder on a colossal scale. It punishes private theft, but itself lays unscrupulous hands on anything it wants, whether the property of citizen or of alien. (148)*

It is on this understanding that Leo Tolstoy defines laws as “rules made by people who govern by means of organized violence, for non-compliance with which the non-complier is subjected to blows to loss of liberty, or even to being murdered”.

What these attacks on state, property and laws point to is that the state consists of a complete arsenal of laws, decrees, ordinances and what not, all serving to protect the diverse forms of representative government, delegated or usurped, beneath which humanity is writhing. It is on this platform that anarchists have often pointed out in their perpetual criticism of the various forms of government- that is the mission of all governments, monarchical, constitutional or republican, is to protect and maintain by force the privileges of the classes in possession, the aristocracy, clergy and traders. For the anarchists, fundamental laws and taxes, excise duties, the organization of ministerial departments and their offices, of the army, the police, the church, etc have no other end than to maintain, patch up and develop the administrative machine. And this machine in its turn serves almost entirely to protect the privileges of the possessing classes. Kropotkin charges: “analyze all these laws, observe them in action day by day and you will discover that not one is worth preserving”. (113)

In view of the ugly purpose of law and its corollary of crime perpetuation, the abolition of the state and law, the immense class of so-called “crimes and misdemeanors” will disappear on the day on which private property ceases to exist. In bringing the issue of property to a halt, the anarchists are of the view that in any socio economic formation in history, property has brought about the worst degradation of mankind in the name of slavery, selfdom and the plight of workers under capitalism. For the anarchists, people without political organization, therefore suffer no deprivation and live naturally in their natural habitat. In such an anarchists society “the main supports of crime become idle and redundant. No more laws; No more judges; liberty, equality and practical human sympathy become natural and spontaneous among people in the society. Given the anarchists society, it is obvious that the so-called general interests which the state is reputed to represent and which in reality are nothing else than the general and continuing negation of the positive interests of regions, communes, associations and the vast majority of individuals subjected to the state, are in fact an abstraction, a fiction, a lie and that the state is like a vast shambles or an enormous graveyard in which

under the shadow and pretext of that abstraction, all the true aspirations and all the living forces of a country, generously and beatifically allow themselves to be buried [6].

Anarchist Society: the Alternative to the Demise of the State: The concept of society without government is essential for an understanding of the anarchism. In his criticism of political society as it is, the anarchist has a vision of a desirable alternative society and means of achieving it. Having decided that government is undesirable as shown in the preceding sections, the question arises, what is the alternative means of human organization that will enable us to live without it? In answer to this, Kropotkin argues “that far from thriving on competition, natural selection sought out the means by which competition could be avoided” and those means he calls “Mutual Aid”. [1]

The questions of criticism which the opponents of anarchism ask is: what happens to the characteristics Of a state (like modern state boundaries - Rivers, seas, mountains, military, treaties etc)? How could boundaries between states (societies) be determined if there should be no state?

To the anarchist, he would suppose to ignored these boundaries, or abolish them. The realities are after all human beings with certain desires, with primitive needs. Those human beings, according to their needs and sympathies, will spontaneously associate themselves into groups for mutual aid, will voluntarily organize an economy which assures the satisfaction of their needs. This is the principle of mutual aid. For Kropotkin, it is this principle which the anarchist makes the foundation of his social order and upon which he believes he can build that democratic form of society which Rousseau felt was reserved for the gods. [7]

The belief of the anarchists that is inherent in man is the natural law and that man should live by it and that natural law establishes cooperation-voluntary cooperation which is the fundamental basis of society. What the anarchists are really trying to find is a way out, the alienation that is in the contemporary world, because of its vast organizational ramifications, leads to man being isolated among the ni of his fellows. What has happened, according to the anarchists “is a kind of polarization, in which the state has taken over from the individual, the communal responsibilities that once gave his personal life the extended dimension of fellowship, both in the local setting and in the world in general. According to

Woodcock “in most modern societies responsibilities are in urgent danger of being strangled by paternalistic authority. [1]

The anarchists in the bid to initiate the socially necessary activities wish not only to recreate a living fellowship between man and man, but also to eliminate the distance which authority places between individual men. The question is: How is this possible? The anarchist will say through the principle of decentralization. What is this principle of decentralization and how can it achieve the anarchist paradise or nirvana?

For the anarchist, the basis of the principle of decentralization is the view that what characterizes the state, apart from its foundation on authority and coercion, is the way in which it cumulatively centralizes all social and political functions and in doing so puts them out of the reach of the citizens whose lives they shape. Hence, men are deprived of freedom to decide on their own futures and this means that they lose the sense of purpose in their lives. Some people are cushioned by wealth and privilege from feeling the direct impact of this process, though they too are affected in insidious ways, but the poor and the underprivileged experience the impositions of the paternalistic state in a very direct way.

For these reasons, the anarchist proposes, as necessary basis for any transformation of society, the breaking down of gigantic impersonal structures of the state and of the great corporations that dominate industry and communication. Instead of attempting to concentrate social functions on the largest possible scales, which progressively increases the distance between the individual and the source of responsibility even in modern democracies, we should begin again from the smallest practicable unit of organization, so that face-to-face contacts can take the place of remote commands and everyone involved in an operation cannot only know how and why it is going on, but can also share directly in decisions regarding anything that affects him directly, either as a worker or a citizen.

Such an attitude according to Woodcock, of course implies that the activity of the functional groups into which society divides itself will be voluntary. For the anarchists, this has a pragmatic analogy seen in the voluntary organizations that already exist and seeing to what extent they are capable of becoming the units in a democratic society e.g trade unions, syndicates, professionally unions- all those groups which crystallize around a human function.

In essence what the anarchists offer as solution to the social alienation which occurs in modern society through the rule of gigantic corporations is decentralization via federalism. To the anarchists, decentralization does not mean fragmentation as critics will bring against anarchism. Rather to the anarchists it means the strengthening of social bonds and social virtues by reinforcing relationships at the most basic grassroots level. In their defence, [8] writes: “Decentralization of autonomy does not mean the break-up of society into small, isolated, economically self sufficient groups, which is neither possible nor desirable.” (40)

Here there is a reversal of state power. Instead of authority descending from political heaven by a ladder of bureaucracy, they see responsibility beginning among individuals and small groups given dignity by freedom. The most important unit of society, in their view is that in which people cooperate directly to fulfill their immediate needs. The basic nuclear unit appears in various forms to the anarchist writers. Godwin calls it the **PARISH**, Proudhon calls it the **COMMUNE**, while the syndicalists call it the **WORKSHOP**. The name matters very little, the fact of direct collaboration and consultation among the people most intimately involved in a phase of living is the important thing.

Living on the edge of a pre-industrial age, libertarian writers like Proudhon and Godwin did not see the level of social cooperation and organization beyond the house, the street, the village and the commune. But with the advent of Industrial Revolution and modern technology modifications are made to take care of larger areas and to meet up with the complexities of organizations. It is in this vein, that the Spanish anarchist Desantillan reminded his comrades:

Once and for all we must realize that we are no longer In a little, utopian world We cannot realize our economic revolution in a local sense; for economy on a localist basis can only cause collective privation ... economy is today a vast organism and all isolation must prove detrimental We must work with a social criterion, considering the interest of the whole country and if possible the whole world. (85)

In essence what the above citation implies is that libertarians (anarchists) organization must reflect the complexity of social relationships and promote solidarity

on the widest possible scale. it can be defined as **FEDERALISM**: that is, coordination through free agreements, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This federalism is different from the federal constitutions of America, Canada, Switzerland, Nigeria, etc. which have a monolithically centralized state machine with the corollary of centrifugal tendencies of a decentralized society.

The anarchists envisaged a different kind of federal society, one in which responsibility begins in the vital nuclei of social life, the work-place and the neighbourhoods where people live. In such a vision all matter of purely local concern matters by which no outside interests' are affected should be decided locally by the people most directly involved, where neighbourhoods have interests in common, they should federate loosely to discuss cooperation and arbitrate differences and so upwards, through provinces to larger geographical entities, until with all frontiers abolished, the whole world becomes a federation of federations of federations. [1]

Simplifying the above administrative picture, the anarchists believe to cope with the industrial and technological advancement, that the industrial society can and should be run by means and groups, associating freely on the basis of locality, regions and industrial specialization. To the anarchists the seeming need of society for government is caused by the injustice and unreasonableness of the social order, which should be abolished. Thus, the "government of men" is replaced by the "administration of things", where reciprocity is the essence of justice. So the idea of independent communes (workplaces) for the territorial organizations and of federations of trade unions for the organization of men in accordance with their different functions, gives concrete conception of a society generated by social revolution. Given this state of affairs, the anarchists wish to see property and class distinctions abolished, so as to leave more for individual difference based on personality and accepted consent.

Anarchists federalism is a vast coordinated network of voluntary alliances embracing the totality of social life, in which all the groups and associations reap the benefits of unity while still exercising autonomy within their own spheres and expanding the range of their freedom. Anarchist organizational principles are not separate entities. For them, Autonomy is impossible without decentralization and decentralization is impossible without federalism.

It has been argued against the anarchists that anarchism is not relevant to the complexity of modern society. In defence of anarchism, [8] writes:

It is precisely this complexity and diversity, above all their overriding concern for freedom and human values that led the anarchist thinkers to base their ideas on the principles of diffusion of power, self management and federalism. (41)

In the same reasoning, Martin Buber says "the greatest attribute of the free society is that of self-regulating and bears within itself the seeds of its own regeneration." (355)

In essence, anarchist federalism is self-governing which unlike the state will be flexible enough to adjust their differences, correct and learn from their mistakes, experiment with new, creative forms of social living and thereby achieve genuine harmony on a higher, humanist plane. In the area of conflicts management, errors and conflicts are confined to the limited jurisdiction of special purpose groups which may do limited damage to the anarchist society. Whereas, miscalculations and criminal decisions made by the state and other autocratically centralized organizations affecting the whole nations, even the whole world, can have the most disastrous consequences.

As against the question critics ask; how can anarchism cope with the vast technological development as its federalism lack the potency of the state to organize with sanction? Anarchist will respond to this by citing bourgeois economists, sociologists and administrators like Peter Drucker, Gunnar Myrdal, John Kenneth etc who now favour a large measure of decentralization, not because they suddenly became anarchists, but primarily because technology has rendered anarchistic forms of organization "Operational necessities". [8] has argued that the bourgeois reformers have yet to learn that as long as these organizational forms are tied to the state or to capitalism, which connotes the monopoly of political economic power, decentralization and federalism will remain a fraud -a more efficient device to enlist the cooperation of the masses in their own enslavement [8]

In essence, the level of technological development and pluralism or diversity of institutions are in line with anarchist federalism which is the diffusion of power. The anarchists believe that the very fact that autonomy, decentralization and federalism are more practical alternative to centralism and statism already presupposes

that these vast organizational networks now performing the function of society are prepared to replace the old bankrupt hyper-centralized administration.

The anarchists have argued that automation have been timely to their constructive idea. [8] has argued that computerized technology has heightened the organizational power of anarchism (voluntary communism). With automation, the economic structure of the new society on self-administration by the people directly involved in economic function is made expedient. According to [8], under automation, millions of highly trained technicians, engineers, scientists, educators, etc who are already organized into local, region, national and international federation will freely circulate information, constantly improving both the quality and availability of goods and services and developing new products for new needs. Again, the anarchists are grateful to modern communications technology they are of the view that communication speeds up direct communication of self-governing unit. The facilities such as tape libraries, computer laundromats, closed television and telephone circuits, handsets, communication satellites and plethora of other devices are making instant, direct communication of a world scale accessible to all. According to the anarchists, this will make "face to face democracy" a cornerstone of a free society [8]

Many opponents of anarchism have asked question concerning the anarchist management position on the conflict arising from association, the administration of criminal law, relationship with foreign countries. This arises as a result of the state numerous functions and its apparatuses of getting around these functions which, the anarchists seem to have no means of acquiring.

In answer to this, the anarchists argue that most of those non functional activities are incidental to a non-functional state that crime, for example, is largely a reaction to the institution of private property and that foreign affairs are largely economic in origin and motivation. To prop this more, Saint Basil says "A perfect society is that which excludes all which was overturned by the sin of our first fathers"[9]

Also the proponents of statism will observe; but it is agreed that there are questions, such certain aspects of common law, infant education, public morality, which are outside the province of the functional organization. These, the anarchist argues, are matters of common sense, solved by reference to the innate goodwill of the community. For this, Bakunin says "liberty, morality and

the human dignity of man consist precisely in this, that he does good, not because it is commanded, but because he conceives it, wills it and loves it [3]

Lending explanation to the above, the anarchists believe that everything now done by the state can be done better by voluntary or associative effort and that no restraints upon conduct is necessary because of the natural tendency of men in a state of freedom to respect the rights of the individual. This is by the enlightenment of the reason.

Against crime, the anarchists believe that the repression of crime where crime might arise could safely be left to spontaneously created organization such as the Vigilance Committees as in early California, where no state government existed. In the view of a leading Russian anarchist, Kropotkin "no cause for litigation would arise after the abolition of the present system of class privilege and unjust distribution of wealth produced by labour, which creates and fosters crime."

As the solution to the demise of the state function, Herbert Reed writes:

We then consider the function which are now performed by the state and which are necessary for our well-being and we ask ourselves to what extent those functions could not be transferred? It is true that there are function like making war and charging rent which are not the expression of an impulse towards mutual aid but it does not need much consideration of such functions to see that they could naturally disappear if the central authority of state was abolished. (132)

Given the administration unit and culmination into federalism, opponents have argued that such a society will suffer stultification of growth in Industries and technological know-how. Human being will find it hard to rise beyond agrarian state.

Against this criticism, the anarchist will still say that anarchism does not necessarily imply a reversion to handicraft and outdoor sanitation. There is no contradiction between anarchism and electric power, anarchism and air transport, anarchism and division of labour and industrial efficiency. Since the functional groups will all be working for their mutual benefit and not for other people's profit or for destructive armaments, the measure of efficiency will be the appetite for fullness of living. A stricken example was the

relatively brief experiences of anarcho-syndicalist rule in Catalonia during the early stages of the Spanish civil war in 1936-37.

In concluding this section, Schiller's defence of anarchism as against the state readily comes in handy and brings anarchism to its conclusive understanding. Thus, he says:

It is thus, that concrete individual life is extinguished in order that the abstract whole may continue its miserable life and the state remains forever a stranger to its citizens, because feeling does not discover it anywhere. The governing authorities find themselves compelled to classify, thereby simplify, the multiplicity of citizens and only to know humanity in a representative form and at a second hand. Accordingly they end by entirely losing sight of humanity and by confounding it with a simple artificial creation of the understanding, whilst on their part the subject classes cannot help receiving coldly laws that address so little to their personality. At length, society weary of having a burden that the state takes so little to their trouble to lighten, falls to pieces and is broken up - a destiny that has long since attended most European states. They are dissolved in what may be called a state of moral natures, in which public authority is only one function more hated and deceived by those who think it necessary, respected only by those who can do without it. (22)

A Critical Appraisal of Anarchism: Going by the analysis of anarchism, one will apparently see that anarchism is the most lofty and plausible political theory that remedies the flaws inherent in other theories that purport to support the supremacy of the state over the individual liberty, (i.e individual and state relationship). Anarchism in all its ramifications has to do with individual's freedom in the society. To its adherents, anarchism is a grand and noble struggle against evil, a secular crusade against the debasement of self, a fight against social degradation that the idea and reality of the state seem to represent.

We must say we appreciate the ingenuity and originality of anarchist writers - their remedial picture of society is a blissful nirvana or paradise which only an insightful and thought-reflective and provoked mind can hesitate to swallow hookline and sinker. The anarchists believe that anarchism is a blue-print of action to a realistic conception of social reconstruction.

In spite of its non-realization, over years anarchism persists as an anti-political force and as a movement it has been active for more than a century and a half. Reason for this is that anarchism's "power" is fundamentally moral. It is in this regard that defendants argue that anarchism is not merely an abstract theory about society; it has developed out of social conditions, the varying forms taken over years are as a result of epochal and cultural influences.

However, one of the most cogent contributions of anarchism to social theory is the proper emphasis on how political institutions, in turn mould economic life. Based on this, anarchists reject fanatical economic fatalism. Equally significant is the importance attached to the will of man, his aspirations, the moral factor and above all, the spirit of revolt in the shaping of human history. That is, to say, anarchism is particularly relevant to the renewal of society. This has been observed in the reformations taking place in the societies. In as much as the anarchists are often engaged in the problems of daily life, they are also seekers after a better future. The utopian element in anarchism is undeniable by them. [10]

All these lofty pictures of anarchism notwithstanding, anarchism cannot go without flaws and loop-holes. Critics always ask, considering the license of individual's freedom and their relationship with one another, can mutual co-operation and understanding resolve conflicts that naturally exist between men? They argue that since there is no enforcement machinery (government) to regulate and balance the activities of men, the society will come to Hobbesian state of nature. It is in this regard that critics see anarchism as "anarchy". In support of the indispensibility of the state in the remedy of this situation, Senex warns: [6]

Political sovereignty can be attenuated but cannot be conjured out of existence by a revolutionary flat... able or even willing to come to terms with the inescapable realities of political power of the state [6]

Another criticism is that anarchists tend to forget the other side of man in nature, they only gave the positive side. Critics remind the anarchists that egoism is a natural tendency in man. They argue even in the voluntary communism though man tries to be altruistic or dispassionate, he would unconsciously show his egoistic proclivity. The interplay of self-interests in organization destroys the tenets of anarchism. In support of this, rational choice theory will tell you that one participates in

any organization or action when he has something selfish to gain. This argument is a good reaction to anarchist mutual aid (principle).

Also, it does not occur to the anarchists that a minority of scientific and technical workers would, in a free society, set up a dictatorship over the rest of society.

The political Unitarians (like Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, etc.) conceive society as one body compelled by uniformity. But the anarchist conceives society as a balance or harmony of groups and most of us belong to harmony of groups and most of us belong to one or more such groups. In reaction to this, critics will ask, how could the difficulty in harmonious interrelation be removed? This is another area where the state is always indispensable with its instrument of sanctions which come in as laws, rules and regulations that act as the harmonious lubricants.

Another criticism against anarchism is that experience has proved the idea wrong. It holds that in spite of the beautiful and seemingly practical aspect of anarchism, there is no place at present where anarchism is practised as a form of organization in a society. The peculiarity of anarchism's leaders as observed is its failure to secure a mass following.

Barber observes that the anarchists are not only a strange breed of revolutionaries, they are a tribe of failures. According to him "their failure lies less in their inability to liberate sizable collectivity of men from the tyranny of authority than in their inability to attract any significant number of men to their peculiar vision of liberation [6]

For critics, the question is not so much why they failed to vanquish the exploiters but why they failed to move the exploited. They observe; where nationalism, liberal democracy, syndicalism (unionism) and Marxism succeeded, anarchism failed. Alone among the nineteenth and twentieth century movements for change, it won no permanent victories, secured no trustworthy allies and attracted no large-scale support. Where in 1930s it had a brief encounter of success in Spain the movement finally failed as it was not able to contend with communism and fascism.

In the same vein, it has been observed that if there is any unity at all to be found among the anarchists, it is in their common antipathy to political order (whether established or disestablished) and their concomitant dedication not merely to the eventual achievement of radical alternatives but to the necessity for a revolutionary overthrow of present order to reach their goals. This has not been so. Going by its failure to

concretise revolution as portrayed by its philosophy, critics have raised fundamental questions about the viability of anarchism as a philosophy of revolution.

Given this practical failure, in spite of the blissful and colossal assumptive redemption, anarchism is impracticably and unrealistically plausible. In this understanding, this writing will prefer to see anarchism as utopia, a passive metaphysics rather than a doctrine of actions, because it is in the problems raised by revolutionary strategy and tactics that the beginning of an answer to our questions are to be found. This is why Barber writes:

The anarchists have never satisfactorily reconciled their multiple and desperate visions of man and society as they conceive them following the revolutionary overthrow of authority with the actual requisites of successful revolutionary activity.... They have never managed to translate the doctrine into a consistent and effective instrument of revolution. (376)

Anarchists, deterred by their fierce sense of mission from adopting a posture of utopian isolationism that would permit them to depict alternative futures without taking responsibility for developing the strategies required for their realization, they nevertheless have not been able to bring themselves to treat strategy in terms divorced from utopian.

On this platform, the theory of anarchism could be seen as hanging somewhere between the ideal and real, between their vision for future and their aspirations for the present, the anarchists end by treating the men upon whom they wish to foist a revolution as figment of their own utopian ideals.

As a prop to the above remark, we buy the position of Barber that the anarchist revolutionary camp is thus strewn with rhetoric, a living theater of intentional deceptions. According to him, "the blurring of the distinction between illusion and reality which is the special virtue of theater, is remarkably well suited to the anarchist's collapse of the distinction between utopian possibilities and realities [6]

Another loophole as pointed out by critics is the fact that anarchists are innocent of what moves men and regimes into action. In their naivety, the anarchists are blind to the truly profane element in politics - the struggle for power among ambitious and competitive interest-oriented beings in this respect, it could be said that for all the anarchists' profanity, their view of actual

men is wildly romanticized. Hunger, greed, ambition, avarice, the will to power, to glory, to honour and to security which have played some roles in all traditional ethnologies find no place in the anarchist portrait of man [7].

On the area of individual autonomy, it is the belief of critics, that in spite of the anarchists' tenets the idea of the absolute liberty of individual may not be remedied because of its assertion on individualism which is founded on the unprovoked, unregulated activities on man. This leads to many to believe that the attachment of lawlessness and terrorism to anarchism will be manifested should anarchism be enthroned. It will be a state of each against all as there is no constituted authority to regulate the activities of men [8].

It has been noted that anarchism is against democracy. In line with this, it is the position of this writing to say that anarchist's arguments against democracy confirm the anarchist temperamental disdain for the people which seems to justify his refusal to articulate revolutionary goals appropriate to practical needs of men. Against this we say that anarchism is a pipe-dream that has no practical recipe but a utopistic bliss [9, 10].

CONCLUSION

In view of this thorough but not exhaustive work on anarchism, the work cannot be concluded without putting in some positive remarks, for anarchism. Going by the tenets of anarchism, it could be taken that by now anarchism would have won more adherents than any other theory, but it is not so. Though anarchists of all persuasions refuse to organize political parties or to present candidates for elections and appointments in promoting their beliefs and interests, they have however often played a reformatory role in politics - (especially in the granting of certain rights to the people by government) through propaganda, manifestoes, demonstrations, strikes and other forms of actions. Also they are active in other voluntary organizations of the present days (especially in labour unions like ASUU and NLC).

In the areas of the alleged lawlessness and anarchy, anarchists uphold that they are peace lovers and would say they favour direct actions by individuals including acts of terrorism and assassination against representatives of government that they considered oppressive such as M.F. Sadi Carnot, a onetime President of France.

The present Nigerian experience has shown that government is no longer necessary. People have no confidence in the government. The government has become a nightmare and source of fear and terrorism. Government cannot claim to justify its role in terms of security and protection of property. Some recent events (especially since 1994), the incessant strikes and confrontation with the police and the army have actually confirmed that the rejection of government is a necessary expediency. The place of privatization and commercialization in the Nigerian system is the confirmed proof of the threat of government to humanity.

As a prop to the above, the decline in figures at the polling booth at recent elections in Nigeria (especially during the elections to constitutional conference and the last local government polls) seems to indicate that people have had more than enough of politicians (whether military or civilian), a trend which if it increases could have serious connotations for any government. Incumbency of government is the determinant of candidature and electoral results which presupposes that without your membership in the cabal of leadership, your personality is meaningless. Also evidence of wealthy people in Nigeria and some African countries shows that government and the place of state in the, society are disguised forms of state robbery.

In the picture given above, it is not the anarchists who are terrorists but the government. In this respect, the anarchists justify that where terrorism develops, it grows from conditions that also favour terrorist response for extreme nationalists or, members of aggrieved minorities - extreme social or economic deprivation, despair of legal remedies, a mutually reinforcing interplay of provocation and reprisal and fear and resentment of police brutality. In this respect, the anarchist will justify the indiscriminate bombing of some parts of the country and the alleged activities of NADECO and other human rights activists. For them all these might slacken the grip of government on the citizens.

However, historical circumstances over years have proved or compounded anarchism as unpracticable in spite of its rejection of all authorities particularly those oppressive forms of authority which manifested themselves in statist coercion. By the turn of 19th and 20th centuries, the more tyrannical and arbitrary forms of statist authority has been displaced by liberal and democratic theory if not in fact the more the philosophy of anarchism stands utopian. This is manifest in concept of legitimacy which has been articulated precisely to discriminate between acceptable and the unacceptable

varieties of authority. Above all, the contemporary theorists (i.e liberals) have concurred in the general recognition (as against anarchism) that authority is a prerequisite of civilized life and that justification for authority is necessary.

In view of this, it is the position of this writing to hold that the authority of the state is indispensably normal and therefore does not contradict the autonomy and independence of the individual. Rather, it is married with it and has as part of its function to secure and protect it.

In drawing the article home, we equate anarchism with political Atheism. As a political atheist, he simply does not believe in the reality of political power. He sees national politics as essentially mythical. In the words of Gary Snyder anarchist sees the seat of power as Mount Olympus, elections as tribal rites without any discernible efficacy. However meticulously one performs the rites, life goes on such as before whether it be too little rain or too little peace. [4]

As political atheism, anarchism has attracted no social scientist because its concerns are not social realities, it has intrigued no first order philosopher because it is riddled with paradox, stranded between its lust for revolution and its penchant for utopia. It has attracted no followers because it has had leaders who would lead where men cannot or will not follow. It disdains the men it would liberate. All the crucial moment it prefers its own vision to their needs.

This writing also shares the belief that in the anarchist hierarchy of values, it is the primacy of the aesthetics that is most evident. This is understood when the anarchist poet writes “what matters the victims provided the gesture is beautiful?” In all, anarchism hardly qualifies as a movement. It is a movement of imagination-realmen, mudane needs, comes second.

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